

WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND THE LIVERPOOL SLAVE TRADE

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[T]hey were simply trying to master the racial disorder from which they had formed themselves.

—Michel Foucault

“The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don’t turn against him, they crush those beneath them—You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style.”

—Heathcliff

London, 1 October 1771: James Sommersett, a black slave, “absented himself from the service” of his master “and absolutely refused to return.” Abolitionist Granville Sharp hired counsel, secured a writ of Habeas Corpus and pursued the case to trial. Lord Chief Justice Mansfield of the King’s Bench was asked to decide if a black slave who accompanied his master to England could be forcibly returned to the colonies for resale. The judge ruled reluctantly, encouraging both parties to reach an out of court settlement. Mansfield repeatedly asserted that the decision was narrow, but his language was unequivocal: “The state of slavery is of such a nature, . . . is so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it but positive law.”¹ Technically, the Mansfield decision abolished neither slavery in Britain nor involuntary transportation of slaves to the colonies, as newspaper accounts and correspondence by such notables as Hannah More testify.² But it did reverse the Yorke-Talbot opinion of 1729, define the crisis of slavery with new clarity, hearten its opponents, and alarm those with an investment in human capital.³ Edward Long, the most famous advocate of the planter’s interest, wrote in *Candid Reflections*: “How far the late judicial sentence may be consistent with the spirit of *English law*, I will not take upon me to determine; sure I am, that it cannot be made compatible with the spirit of English commerce.”⁴

The English city with the most spirited commerce in slaves was Liverpool. At mid-century Liverpool ranked third behind London and Bristol, but by the inter-bellum period (1763-1776) she had

eclipsed her competitors and was the premier slaving port in Britain. The New Exchange/Town Hall was ornamented with “busts of blackamoors and elephants, emblematical of the African trade.”⁵ By 1764 Liverpool boasted more than twice the number of vessels engaged in the triangular trade than Bristol, and by 1804 Liverpool merchants were responsible for more than eighty-four percent of the British transatlantic slave trade. At the close of the eighteenth century, Britain accounted for nearly fifty-five percent of the traffic world wide, and the percentage grew until the month of its abolition.⁶ It is little wonder that in 1804 Liverpool merchants, in response to a bill seeking abolition, petitioned Parliament to observe that “under the protection of the Legislature [the petitioners] embarked a considerable part of their property in that Trade, [and] will be very materially injured if the said Bill should pass into a Law,” nor is it surprising that none of the several versions and revisions of Thomas Southerne’s *Oroonoko*, increasingly popularized and polemical in the eighteenth century, ever appeared on a Liverpool stage.⁷

According to C. P. Sanger’s chronology of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Earnshaw’s walk to Liverpool occurred at the “beginning of harvest” in 1771, the eve of the *Sommersett* case and the *Mansfield* decision.⁸ In lieu of a whip for Cathy and a fiddle for Hindley, objects emblematic of the cruelty and indolence nurtured by institutionalized slavery, Earnshaw substitutes Heathcliff, “dark almost as if it came from the devil.”⁹ Earnshaw found “it . . . in the streets of Liverpool where he picked it up and inquired for its owner—Not a soul knew to whom it belonged” (*WH*, 45). Heathcliff’s racial otherness cannot be a matter of dispute; Brontë makes that explicit. From the first and frequently thereafter he is termed a “gypsy” (*WH*, 6, 45, 48, 61); Mr. Linton recognizes him as “that strange acquisition my late neighbor made in his journey to Liverpool—a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway” (*WH*, 62); Nelly encourages Heathcliff to “frame high notions of [his] birth”—his father might have been the “Emperor of China” and his mother “an Indian queen.” Heathcliff may not be “a regular black” (*WH*, 72), and Nelly cannot “image some fit parentage” for “the dark little thing” (*WH*, 403), but his bloodline is unambiguously tainted by color.¹⁰ In effect, he is an irregular black, a mongrel, a source of great anxiety for the mid-nineteenth-century Victorian.

Institutionalized slavery as manifested in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was fundamentally incompatible with a British ethos, in part that “spirit of English Law” that Long avoids confront-

ing. David Eltis notes that “from the viewpoint of economic self-interest, British anti-slavery policy appears wrongheaded enough to qualify for inclusion in Barbara Tuchman’s catalog of folly in government.”¹¹ Despite Adam Smith’s treatise arguing the advantages of a *laissez-faire* labor economy (1776), Britain’s abolition of the slave trade in 1807, then her active naval suppression of it, and finally her emancipation of slaves throughout the colonies in 1834, cost her subjects dearly. The compensation to the West Indian planters for their capital loss equalled forty percent of British revenue in 1833, “almost three times the annual outlay for the English poor.”¹² One might imagine that after bitter struggles over the legitimacy of the slave trade at the turn of the century, thirty years of military suppression, and the ultimate emancipation of slaves throughout the empire, that popular interest would have flagged and sentiment dulled. On the contrary, *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* began a new series in 1846, which continued until the midst of World War I. Concerns had shifted from the evils of the “middle passage” to the evils of coolie labor, but the monthly magazine with increasing subscribership continued to focus on the diverse elements intimately and problematically bound to a slave economy: the technological advances thought to herald the obsolescence of slave labor, the production figures of cotton and sugar (the two commodities most dependent on slave labor), and the moral threat of prostitution, exacerbated by the short-sighted economics of a slavery that privileged male productivity.¹³ Although slavery put sugar in their tea, coffee in their cups, cotton shirts on their backs, and pounds sterling in their bank accounts, the institution made English blood run cold and warmed an Anglo-Saxon passion for appropriating the concept of liberty as its own.

Reginald Horsman in *Race and Manifest Destiny* traces the development of Anglo-Saxon mythic identity and its accompanying mystification of race. The myth glorifies and sentimentalizes the savage, hardy, free Anglo-Saxon whose natural liberty was corrupted by the imposition of an unnatural autocratic rule.¹⁴ The myth in part underwrote the development of the concept of precedent, inventing a “spirit of English law” and thereby bolstering the position of those who would limit the monarchy and royal prerogative.¹⁵ After Waterloo, the myth shifted from domestic to imperial significance: “Englishmen and Americans increasingly compared the Anglo-Saxon peoples to others and concluded that blood, not environment or accident, had led to their success.”¹⁶ The discourses that produced

and participated in a theory of racial superiority compiled evidence wherever it could be gleaned: anecdote, found in traveler's journals such as those of Edward Long, Bryan Edwards and "Monk" Lewis; science and pseudo-science, drawn from Linnaeus and Buffon and including a wide variety of historians, philosophers, physicians, phrenologists and philologists willing to engage in the debate between biblical monogenesis and polygenesis. They were literary and popularized: Disraeli, Carlyle, Kingsley, Kipling and Trollope all lent a hand, finding a forum in broadly distributed publications including *Blackwood's*.¹⁷ Who exactly was to be included in this superior pedigree was problematical. Blacks, browns, yellows, reds and non-English speaking Celts were excluded, while Scandinavians, Teutons and Englishmen were included, but the location of classical Greeks and Romans, and the Hebrews was less clear cut. While theorists argued about the innate character (docile or brutish) and the ultimate fate (extinction or refinement) of the "inferior" races, agents of the second empire made the essence of the matter clear by mid-century.¹⁸ "All is race; there is no other truth," wrote Disraeli; Robert Knox echoes that sentiment, "Race is everything, literature, science, art—in a word, civilization depends on it." The January, 1844, *Edinburgh Review* aphorizes: "Of the great influence of Race in the production of National Character, no reasonable enquirer can now doubt."¹⁹

Wuthering Heights is the site in which the problematics of an Anglo-Saxon mythology saddled with the fact of slavery and the "fact" of race are revealed, if not resolved. Brontë locates her plantation colony not on the margins of the empire, some exotic island half way around the world, but in the heart of Yorkshire. In the novel the Heights, corrupted by the introduction of the racially other, is the place where the figures of a system of bondage work out their relationships. These relationships are represented according to principles common to abolitionist, anti-abolitionist, and Anglo-Saxon racialist discourses available at the time the novel was composed. Heathcliff, Hindley and the elder Catherine are the agents who act out these relationships and principles. The Grange, like Mother England, is an estate isolated from a planter economy by both breeding and seeming cultural independence. At one point Isabella writes that the distance between the Heights and the Grange is tantamount to "the Atlantic" (*WH*, 169). Despite its insularity, the Grange becomes contaminated. Although the racial other is forced back to its quarters, a second generation, a "new series," of relation-

ships and principles ensues, represented by Heathcliff, Isabella and Linton Heathcliff. Penultimately, that other is eradicated and the impending marriage of the younger Catherine and Hareton is a conventional, approved resolution. However, as in mid-century England where the problems of race and slavery did not vanish with emancipation, the book resists a tidy ending.²⁰

Prior to Heathcliff's arrival, the inhabitants of the Heights and the Grange are racially pure Anglo-Saxons, representative of the yeoman and gentry classes. Both farm and estate are productive, well-defended and portrayed as feudally self-sustaining; there is nothing extraneous, no younger brother, no surplus of daughters, with little need for more than occasional commerce with a world beyond Gimmerton. Even after Heathcliff's arrival, there are only rare gestures to a late eighteenth-century rather than a fifteenth-century world: glazed windows, Joseph's fierce Protestantism and Lockwood's bourgeois bungling.²¹ Precisely because the setting Brontë creates is one where "time stagnates" (*WH*, 34), we are predisposed to minimize Heathcliff's racial otherness, and ignore the possibility that he is a product of a thriving Liverpool slave trade. It is a setting that harkens to a mythical Anglo-Saxon past, both more brutal and more heroic than Victorian England.²² When Heathcliff is introduced, the social equilibrium is upset and the Heights becomes the inverse of a domestic ideal marked by pious faith, a serene and orderly household, and cultivated womanhood. Victorian readers would find both their romanticized projections of the past and their idealized perceptions of their present threatened by this novel, and in fact reviewers warned them that the book was "inexpressively painful" and "too odiously and abominably pagan" for even the "most vitiated class of English readers."²³

Slavery had long been identified as a corrupting institution, and both Aphra Behn (1688) and Thomas Southerne (1695) depicted slavers and one class of planters as villainous and vulgar.²⁴ Mr. Hargrave argued in the Sommersett case that slavery "corrupts the morals of the master, by freeing him from those restraints . . . so necessary for controul of the human passions, so beneficial in promoting . . . virtue."²⁵ Nelly tells Lockwood that Heathcliff "bred bad feeling" (*WH*, 47). Indeed, his presence immediately provokes behavior compatible with a vulgar planter rather than a civilized society: Hindley "blubbers" and Cathy "spits" at him (*WH*, 45-46), the former an unmanly response and the latter a filthy one. Cathy "earned . . . a sound blow from her father to teach her cleaner

manners," but the polluting relationship becomes well established. Cathy and Heathcliff were "very thick" by the time Nelly is reconciled with the Heights after her own act of "cowardice and inhumanity" (WH, 46). Unlike the Grange, at the Heights social order and station are hazily defined as we might expect at the outskirts of civilization. Heathcliff, who has no designated place in the family other than "usurper" and "beggarly interloper" (WH, 47, 49), is given Earnshaw's first born's name. Joseph, the bizarre churl, is the authorized spiritual leader (WH, 25, 51, 56) and unauthorized steward of genealogical lore (WH, 242). Nelly, the "human fixture" (WH, 39) whose servant's status is well-defined at the Grange, occupies an unclassifiable space in the social dynamics of the Heights. The fluidity of station and identity at the Heights is most obviously manifested in Catherine's carved variations of her surname and compounded by the doubling of Catherines (WH, 23). Lockwood's inability to sort out the familial relationships and the impotence of polite discourse at the "mad tea party" (WH, 13-17) indicate that social intercourse is effected by a series of dominations defined by a system other than Enlightenment social contract theory or nineteenth-century English class and family relationships.²⁶

After Earnshaw's death, Hindley emerges as one figure in a bondage relationship with Heathcliff. Depicted as the "negligent," "tyrannical" (WH, 56), non-industrious, and gratuitously cruel "master" (WH, 25), Hindley quits his "paradise on the hearth" only to mete out punishment (WH, 26); his rule is through flogging (WH, 56, 74) and deprivation (WH, 56, 84). Morals, manners and industry are destroyed by the unchecked reign of tyranny. As absolute despot without productive labor and the temporizing influence of his wife, Hindley drinks heavily, resulting in "either his wild-beast's fondness or his madman's rage" (WH, 91). He brutalizes Nelly and his son, and ultimately loses the Heights to Heathcliff at cards. Heathcliff, too, is degraded by the relationship; he is banished from the Earnshaws' company, deprived of education, and forced to "continual hard work, begun soon and concluded late" (WH, 84). From the beginning "a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment" (WH, 46), Heathcliff "yielded with poignant though silent regret" to his servile station: "He acquired a slouching gait," an "ignoble look" and "contrived to convey an impression of inward and outward repulsiveness" (WH, 84). In drawing and developing Heathcliff's character, Emily Brontë creates a manifestation of one Victorian understanding of black Africans:

Whatever great personages this country might anciently have produced and concerning whom we have no information, they are now every where degenerated into a brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty, treacherous, bloody, thievish, mistrustful, and superstitious people."²⁷

Cathy tells Nelly, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff," and she blames Hindley for bringing him "so low" (*WH*, 100). Here Cathy resists the biologism implicit in most mid-nineteenth-century conceptions of race, and instead attributes Heathcliff's degradation to his environment.²⁸ But to entertain a theory of a primeval golden age *and* to accept nurture rather than nature as the determining factor in degradation questions the very concept of race, and thus racial superiority. For mid-century theorists such speculation places the savage origin of black Africans and the primitive origin of Anglo-Saxons in a very dangerous and threatening proximity. Race itself becomes a superstition, and brutality, ignorance and treachery characteristics of degeneration in the potential of any culture—and Hindley is offered as a case in point.

If the attempt to distinguish the qualities of race from those of culture produced anxiety, it did so primarily because of the material reality of slavery. Anti-abolitionist discourses tended to exploit what were represented as the Africans' sub-human characteristics, but slavery is an economic institution, and its intimate connection to race is accidental, not essential. The economic nature of slavery greatly complicates the Marxist concept of commodity fetishism, which posits that interpersonal relationships are material, while social relationships exist between things.²⁹ The slave is quite literally a commodity with an exchange value, by definition a thing capable of effecting social relations. Thus, as Joan Dayan points out in "Race and Romance," the slave becomes for the owner the "ultimate possession" and the pleasure of such ownership becomes "addictive."³⁰ Within the context of bondage, rather than race *per se*, we can begin to demystify the nature of Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship and the problems of confused identity the text poses.

Even the most casual reader senses that the Catherine/Heathcliff dyad is peculiar in its passion and commitment. Both compelling and repugnant, the relationship may pass for love, but as Charlotte Brontë comments in the "Editor's Preface of the New Edition," Heathcliff's "love" "is a sentiment fierce and inhuman" (*WH*, 444). Heathcliff's lack of humanity is a continual concern of the text, but other characters, too, are called "things" and "property" (*WH*, 141,

253), so that the rhetoric of slavery contaminates pervasively. Nelly says that Cathy “was much too fond of Heathcliff. . . . In play, she liked, exceedingly, to act the little mistress; using her hands freely, and commanding her companions.” This game of bondage, what Nelly calls “her pretended insolence,” provides Cathy with “more power over Heathcliff than [Mr. Earnshaw’s] kindness: how the boy would do *her* bidding in anything, and *his* only when it suited his own inclination” (WH, 52). This mistress-bondsman relationship, which Heathcliff explicitly characterizes as slavery (WH, 138), is rooted in his complete submission to her will, rather than mutual affection or sympathy of feeling. His service is the material and social extension of her identity.

At the moment of Heathcliff’s first departure, Cathy admits that her identity is absolutely dependent on his existence; she tells Nelly, “If all else perished, and *he* remained, I should still continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn a mighty stranger. . . . I *am* Heathcliff. . . . [he is] my own being” (WH, 101-2). She explains that she loves him “because he’s more myself than I am” (WH, 100). Her “love” is not a “delight, but necessary,” his existence is not a “pleasure” but her “own being,” and separation from him is “impracticable” (WH, 102). Devoid of a veneer of tender sentimentality and gracious civility, love assumes the qualities of addiction. Indeed when Heathcliff leaves, Cathy falls ill and is cajoled back to health by being allowed “whatever she pleased to demand” (WH, 110). There is, however, a vast difference between being humored and being obeyed. The former is an act of grace on the part of another; the latter is the self’s exercise of power. This distinction emerges when Catherine says that her love for Edgar is like “foliage” while her love “for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath” (WH, 101) and when Heathcliff sneers at Edgar Linton’s “*duty* and *humanity* . . . *pity* and *charity*,” those ideals so central to English civilized domesticity: “He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares!” (WH, 187). The privileges and obligations, “the deep and growing happiness” (WH, 114), of a conventional marriage pale when confronted with the addictive pleasure of absolute possession free of restraint and control of “human” passions. Heathcliff is her ultimate possession: “*My* Heathcliff” she proclaims at their last meeting, “I shall love mine yet; and take him with me—he’s my soul” (WH, 197). In the manner of the Gothic novel, she does maintain her possession beyond the

grave. In *Wuthering Heights*, the supernatural is possession and, as a convention of fiction, discloses an appropriation of the system of rules inherent in institutionalized slavery only to impose those rules on the concept of romantic love.³¹ But, slavery is a corrupting institution, and absolute possession in *Wuthering Heights* results in disease, anorexia, and self-willed annihilation.

Finally faced with a “cruelly provoking” choice between Edgar and Heathcliff, Cathy retreats to her room, refuses to eat, and suffers from hallucinations. Significantly, she cannot recognize her image in a mirror, confusing it with some other face reflected in “the black press shin[ing] like jet.” “Overwhelmed” by “utter blackness,” the error leaves her trembling, bewildered and ashamed, believing she was back at the Heights “enclosed in the oak panelled bed at home” (*WH*, 150-52).³² In this scene imagery of blackness, confinement, and insanity are tightly bound to the plantation site and to confused and lost identity. Cathy anticipates death and taking Heathcliff with her: “I won’t rest till you are with me. . . . Be content, you always followed me!” (*WH*, 154). The bond between mistress and bondsman transcends the laws of nature, and transgresses the bonds of matrimony.

During a three year hiatus of which we have only vague speculation, Heathcliff acquires a rudimentary gentleman’s education, speech and manners, and cash enough to “pass”—indeed to irresistibly attract Isabella Linton who mistakes him for “a rough diamond—a pearl containing oyster of a rustic” (*WH*, 126). She projects the romanticized version of the Anglo-Saxon hero onto him, picturing him as “a hero of romance . . . expecting unlimited indulgences from [his] chivalrous devotion”; she “cherishes” “a fabulous notion of [his] character” (*WH*, 183). Cathy attempts to dissuade her, characterizing him as a brute: “An unreclaimed creature, without refinement—without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone . . . a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man” (*WH*, 126). Racialist discourses were riddled with paradoxical anecdotal commentary on the nature and depth of feeling in blacks.³³ On the one hand, they were understood to be universally deceitful and ruled by transitory appetites and terrors, and on the other their fidelity and selflessness were eulogized and legendary.³⁴ In creating the “fiendish” Heathcliff, Emily Brontë adds to Long’s characterization by incorporating the varied and seemingly contradictory mid-century stereotypes of the African. Isabella taunts him: “If I were you, I’d go stretch myself over her grave, and die like a faithful dog” (*WH*, 217). Heathcliff asserts, “I’d

not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton's at Thrushcross Grange—not if I might have the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley's blood!" (WH, 59). As slave, Heathcliff is both devoted to his "condition" and capable of vicious rebellion. Only Cathy's will, which has been conflated with his own, prevents him from tearing Hindley's "heart out" and drinking "his blood" (WH, 181). The spectre of slave rebellion (a frequent reality in the early nineteenth century) and the viciousness with which they were executed demonstrate how tenuous and fearful the planters' position was.

It falls to Edgar Linton to identify explicitly the more insidious danger in the intimacy of the master-bondsman relationship: Catherine has become "habituated to [Heathcliff's] baseness" and his "presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous" (WH, 140).³⁵ Of course English fear of the base, foreign and domestic, is at least as old as Pope's *Dunciad*; however, in *Wuthering Heights* baseness does not threaten dullness, but vitiating energy. Decorum and a rein on her desires are never Cathy's strong suit; the novel makes clear that the brutal heroics that underwrite the Anglo-Saxon myth are incompatible with the myth of civilized Victorian condescension and the domestic ideal, but they are quite at home with the uncontrolled passions nurtured by an undisguised power/bondage relationship. She humiliates Edgar and sarcastically snaps when he covers his face, "Oh! Heavens! In the old days this would win you a knighthood . . . We are vanquished!" Heathcliff refers to Edgar as "it" and calls him a "slavering, shivering thing" and a "milk-blooded coward" (WH, 141). Isabella, however, retains her romantic notions, the inevitable residue of a mystification of the primitive. At the Heights, Heathcliff has usurped the dominant culture, and he has contaminated the Grange.

At this point the novel begins to dismantle the Anglo-Saxon myth of racial superiority. When we map out a racial archive for *Wuthering Heights*, we find that its "enunciative possibilities" are expanded when cloaked in both the language of "love" and "dispassionate" scientific discursivity. Heathcliff becomes the master of both discourses; he contaminates and pollutes each with the other.³⁶ He "trains" himself to be methodical and industrious, ruthless and treacherous, temperate and patient, "working like Hercules" to regain his "condition," his place beside Cathy, and "to demolish the two houses" (WH, 392). He usurps the power of vision and with it the authority to interpret. Discovering Isabella's infatuation with

him, Heathcliff stares at her “as one might do at a strange repulsive animal, a centipede from the Indies, for instance, which curiosity leads one to examine in spite of the aversion it raises” (*WH*, 130). The colonizing gaze has been reversed. Where once Heathcliff wished he “had light hair and fair skin” (*WH*, 71), saw Edgar Linton as “handsome” and himself less so, he is now repulsed by, while still curious about, those features.³⁷ We are reminded of Lockwood’s observation that the people of the region are like “a spider in a dungeon”; they “may concentrate [their] entire appetite” and they can watch so intently that a single neglect puts one “seriously out of temper” (*WH*, 77). Heathcliff appropriates Lockwood’s watchfulness and Lewis’s spirit of experimentation. He adopts the methodology Jefferson advises for discovering the secrets of racial difference, particularly skin color: “To justify a general conclusion, requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the Anatomical knife, to Optical glasses, to analysis by fire, or by solvents.” Heathcliff becomes the planter, acquires human property and creates an empire over which he dominates without the “pure civilities of Mother England.”³⁸ Instead, his interests in ownership are self-consciously “ghoulish” (*WH*, 131) and he says he would enjoy “vivisection” (*WH*, 328). He keeps the doors locked, the objects of his gaze trapped, and guards vigilantly against rebellion. Unlike Hindley, he does not degenerate into indolence and intemperance; unlike Cathy, he recognizes the danger in loving what he owns; his domination is laborious and calculated.

Certainly we can attribute Heathcliff’s “courting” of Isabella to his desire to obtain her legacy, but first he admits that his interest is “ghoulish” and he would make her “waxen face . . . the colours of the rainbow” (*WH*, 131). Brutality here changes that first distinguishing mark of the Anglo-Saxon, its color. He never acquires the essential mark of civilization as it is defined by Bryan Edwards—“a display of tenderness towards the female sex.” He remains “without cultivation.”³⁹ By erasing this feminine privilege from the language of the dominant culture, Emily Brontë signals her split from a previous literary generation; she defoliates the hedges and transgresses the neat boundaries erected by the Darcys and the Knightlys. Heathcliff, for example, consciously parodies the pretensions of those he has come to dominate: hospitality, family, a discourse and behavior designed to veil sovereign power and brutality. When he says, “I want my children about me” (*WH*, 347), he appropriates the language of “love” uncontaminated by sentiment. We are faced not only

with hybrid discursivity, but with the problem of miscegenation in its most threatening form—white gentried female and the racially other male.

Isabella Linton, who should manifest the virtues of the cult of true womanhood, deteriorates, living as she does in such close, unremitting and, finally, sexual proximity to the racial other. When Nelly visits the Heights she notes: “He was the only thing there that seemed decent, and I thought he never looked better . . . he would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman, and his wife as a thorough little slattern!” (WH, 179). Heathcliff agrees: “She degenerates into a mere slut! . . . However, she’ll suit this house so much the better for not being over nice, and I’ll take care she does not disgrace me by rambling abroad” (WH, 183). Stripped of the prerogatives of her race, class and gender, Isabella is vulnerable, and the racist and misogynistic commentary about the lasciviousness of black women so rampant in Edward Long’s *History of Jamaica* are cathected onto her.⁴⁰

Through Heathcliff’s character, Brontë exposes the “twisted sentimentality” of passions passing as love firmly affixed to bondage. Possession allows Heathcliff to experiment with his “centipede,” to discover exactly what it takes to destroy a mystification that attempts to conflate brutality and refined sensibility. The experiment was

“a positive labour of Hercules! . . . No brutality disgusted her—I suppose she had an innate admiration of it, if only her precious person were secure from injury! . . . I’ve sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamefully cringing back! . . . The nuisance of her presence outweighs the gratification to be derived from tormenting her!” (WH, 184)

The “gratification” Heathcliff derives from tormenting Isabella emerges from his “ruthless curiosity” and the pleasure derived from the power to watch and examine.⁴¹ Isabella resists, cherishing her “fabulous notions” of his character constructed from romances of an Anglo-Saxon golden age, notions that Heathcliff systematically demolishes. He has succeeded in degrading Isabella and demonstrating that a nineteenth-century concept of “race” with its accompanying classifications and hierarchies is socially constructed, a system with no essential meaning. Emily Brontë has conflated the model novel hero with the conventional novel usurper; he scandalizes because he flouts a fundamental social code—civility towards women and chil-

dren—and he merits his superior position according to a code that valorizes talent combined with industry.

Nelly, early in her narrative, characterizes Heathcliff as “very near—close handed . . . greedy” (*WH*, 41), and Cathy concludes, “Avarice is growing in him a besetting sin” (*WH*, 127). Although the novel critiques unrestrained capitalism, Heathcliff is not corrupted primarily by the spirit of commerce as opposed to the spirit of law or decency, but by the nineteenth-century spirit of experiment, investigation and examination that Foucault identifies and explores throughout his work. Heathcliff’s exercise of mastery is neither impatient nor haphazard; it is executed according to critical, evaluative principles. For a character seemingly over-full of passion to the point of obsession, Heathcliff is remarkably methodical, clinical, and dispassionate. After Linton lures Nelly and the younger Catherine inside the Heights, Heathcliff comments: “‘Had I been born where laws are less strict, and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of those two, as an evening’s amusement’” (*WH*, 328). Nelly notes that his response to Hindley’s death was devoid of triumph: “He maintained a hard, careless deportment, indicative of neither joy nor sorrow; if anything, it expressed a flinty gratification of a piece of difficult work successfully executed” (*WH*, 230). Instead his “fiendish prudence” (*WH*, 211) focuses on the analytic, a cruel sense of the curious: “‘Now my bonny lad,’” he says to the orphaned Hareton, “‘you are *mine*! And we’ll see if one tree won’t grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!’” (*WH*, 230). Heathcliff has acquired another piece of human property, and initially we are tempted to identify Heathcliff with the wind that has twisted and corrupted Hindley. However, we are also invited to understand that the wind is the tyranny and oppression that has twisted Heathcliff and now threatens Hareton, with whom he explicitly identifies (*WH*, 267, 393). Nelly tells Lockwood that Hareton has been “reduced to a state of complete dependence . . . and lives in his own house as a servant deprived of . . . wages” (*WH*, 231). Heathcliff does not debauch Hareton as he did Hindley; he enslaves him as he himself was enslaved.

The pleasure Heathcliff enjoys from his property, both real and human, lies not in its acquisition, nor in its belonging to him, but in its degradation, its demolition, its destruction (*WH*, 267, 392–93). He wishes he “could annihilate it from the face of the earth” (*WH*, 407). As master, he can debauch, but his interest is in investigating, scrutinizing and experimenting with degradation. Bragging to Nelly,

he claims, "I've a pleasure in [Hareton]" because "he has satisfied my expectations . . . I've taught him to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak." Hareton now takes "pride in his brutishness" (*WH*, 267); an Englishman should pride himself on his Anglo-Saxon heritage. For Heathcliff, Hareton is a "personification of [his] youth, not a human being" (*WH*, 393). Dispassionately, Heathcliff has attempted to form his ward into a bondsman stripped of his humanity, and in his face he sees reflected his own "wild endeavors to hold [his] right," his "degradation," and his "pride" (*WH*, 364). Heathcliff does not oppress to wrest labor (as Hindley did) or love (as Cathy does) from his human property, but to watch oppression itself, to see what can happen when a human is turned into a thing.⁴² By oppressing, Heathcliff can appropriate knowledge to ultimately reject it and embrace his own slavery, not magnanimously, but absolutely; this way he can attain his "heaven" (*WH*, 409), regain his "condition," and obtain his happiness by "dissolving with [Cathy]" (*WH*, 349). It is a conversional, even Hegelian, form of surrender of will.⁴³

How readers respond to Heathcliff's love for Catherine is complex. In considering his love, Charlotte Brontë wrote: "Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is" (*WH*, 444). Love is not bound to lust, a condition our critical antennae would quickly sense and quickly dismiss or condemn. Instead, the absolutism of Heathcliff's love is defined in terms of bondage, and it is chilling to suspect that at some level we find enslavement spiritual—as Poe and Hegel did—or worse, viscerally appealing. Like Isabella, "no brutality disgust[s]" us; perhaps we have an "innate admiration of it" as long as we ourselves suffer no injury. Slavery is condemned as perpetrated by Hindley and Heathcliff, but at the same time it is quite literally romanticized.

What is not romanticized or made appealing is miscegenation, as manifested by its sole issue: Linton Heathcliff. The corruption attributed to hybridization in mid-century racialist discourses is rendered in Linton Heathcliff. He manifests most of the worst accidents and mistakes mixed blood could represent for mid-century England: disease, viciousness, treason, cowardice, duplicity, unmerited power, shiftlessness. The problem of the mulatto is rampant in the discourses about institutionalized slavery. "Monk" Lewis notes, "They are almost universally weak and effeminate persons . . . one black is considered as more than equal to two mulattoes." They make the lives of their own slaves "wretched," and the misery of

Jamaican slaves would be greatly relieved if mulattoes were prohibited from becoming slave owners. Warned to his subject, Lewis goes so far as to support the prohibition of “domestic slavery,” limiting the institution to “plantation labour” which he views as economically essential to both colony and motherland.⁴⁴ As a side effect, removing blacks from the household would increase geographic and cultural distance between the races. Thomas Jefferson is even more explicit about his fear of miscegenation and more adamant about securing geographic separation. In comparing classical slavery with its modern version he argues that Greek and Roman slaves were white and once freed indistinguishable from their former masters. They might mix “without staining the blood of [the] master.” Black slaves, however, when freed must “be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”⁴⁵

Emily Brontë creates Linton Heathcliff in the mold of the racialist stereotypes and anxieties of the time. As a mulatto, he exploits his weakness, paleness, the younger Catherine’s good heart and better nature, and his position as “little tyrant” (*WH*, 333). From the beginning he is an “ailing, peevish creature” (*WH*, 225). Nelly assesses him on first sight as a “pale, delicate, effeminate boy” with a “sickly peevishness” that Edgar Linton had escaped (*WH*, 245), and calls him “the worst-tempered bit of sickly slip that ever struggled into his teens! Happily . . . he’ll not win twenty” (*WH*, 295). Heathcliff is appalled by his “property”—“that’s worse than I expected . . . Though it is something to see you have not white blood” (*WH*, 253-54). Linton is variously termed “paltry creature,” “the vapid thing” (*WH*, 265), a “distorted nature” (*WH*, 310), “a feeble tool” (*WH*, 313), “confirmed invalid” (*WH*, 318), “abject reptile” (*WH*, 324), and a “cockatrice” (*WH*, 333), venomous and deadly. He is a “little tyrant” who would “undertake to torture any number of cats if their teeth be drawn and their claws pared” (*WH*, 333). Even though Heathcliff is “bitterly disappointed with the whey-faced whining wretch” (*WH*, 256), he orders Hareton to obey him and has “arranged every thing with a view to preserve the superior and gentleman in him” (*WH*, 255-56). Although Linton may not fully understand the dynamics of power, when he has it he exercises it without restraint. The younger Catherine is condemned to attend to him alone until his death, and of that event she comments, “He’s safe, and I’m free” (*WH*, 355).

It is only just that we question the source of Linton’s spinelessness, spitefulness, sickness and moral turpitude. His mother may have

been silly, duped by a mystification purveyed by trashy novels and romantic claptrap, but she did not lack backbone. Pregnant and bleeding, she revolted against her master, and refused to seek the nearby protection of her brother, electing instead to strike out on her own. That she died ought not to be held against her in a novel littered with corpses. Much could be said against Linton's father, but effeminency, cowardice, and weakness of will are not among his flaws. However, for discourses that shroud a fear of racial mixture by positing the inferiority of the mulatto, Linton serves a purpose; he is a wretch who erupts as the locus of corruption and pollution in the novel. When Linton flies into a rage, Joseph cries, "That's the father! We've alla summut uh orther side in us" (WH, 306). In Linton, Heathcliff is the "orther side," the source of contamination. With Heathcliff, Emily Brontë critiqued racist presuppositions about Anglo-Saxon superiority; but with Linton she reimposes the taboo against miscegenation. The enduring result of miscegenation is narrowly avoided by Heathcliff's abstinent lifestyle, Cathy's "infernal selfishness" (WH, 196) and Linton Heathcliff's poor health. The possibilities innate in hybridization, according to contemporary racist theory, are *de facto* exterminated by the author. The mulatto in *Wuthering Heights* is an enunciative impossibility. The stain of Heathcliff's blood will not smudge any little faces in the local region nor spread generation after generation until the entire population is infected. The Heights and its environs will revert to Anglo-Saxon racial purity.

This fatal solution is not quite as final as one might expect; the reconstituted community at the close of the novel is not left culturally unpolluted. First, we are hard pressed to remember that Hareton is Frances and Hindley's son. Both Nelly and Heathcliff mark his physical resemblance to the elder Catherine. His filial loyalty is to Heathcliff, not his father, and the younger Catherine is forced to desist from trying to alienate that affection. Furthermore, the parallels between Hareton and Heathcliff are both implicit and explicit. Heathcliff sees his own youth in Hareton (WH, 393-94). When Heathcliff arrived at the Heights he spoke "some gibberish that nobody could understand" (WH, 45); when Isabella speaks to Hareton for the first time after she moved to the Heights, "he replie[s] in a jargon [she] did not comprehend" (WH, 167). Heathcliff hangs Isabella's "little dog" when they elope (WH, 184); when she makes her escape from the Heights, she sees Hareton "hanging a litter of puppies" (WH, 224). Both defile the mother tongue and

affront a British sensitivity to cruelty to animals. Although Hareton is Hindley's by blood, we are inclined to think of him as Heathcliff's "immaculate" creation, embodying his masculinity and vigor—traits systematically denied a racial hybrid, but afforded the racial other and the racial ancestor.

The other disquieting element that stubbornly persists at the ending of the novel is imagery of bondage, chillingly domesticated and civilized. Our last extended look at Catherine and Hareton is rendered by Lockwood, to whom Terry Eagleton attributes "aesthetic false moves" and "a coy, beaming sentimental self-indulgence." Eagleton may be correct in asserting that the "language used" unconsciously describes a "cultural transfusion."⁴⁶ If so, it is plasma extracted from whole blood, a "masked other." The domestic scene that Lockwood relates is riddled with a "twisted sentimentality" of "playful" bondage⁴⁷: "Recollect, or I pull your hair!" Catherine threatens. When Hareton's attention lapses, it is recalled "by a sharp slap on the cheek" (WH, 371-72). The economy of slaps and kisses, so sweetly told and mitigated by visions of "smiting beauty," is reminiscent of Cathy's "pretended insolence" that enslaved Heathcliff. Nelly assures us that the younger Catherine's "anger was never furious; her love never fierce" (WH, 232), but we should remember that she "gave [Hareton] a cut with [her] whip" (WH, 307) and "beguiled Hareton" to labor for her (WH, 397). Are we to suppose that Catherine and Hareton's relationship is but an impoverished reflection of the "love" Heathcliff and Cathy shared? I think not. We should respect it for the virulent strain of ideology it is, a "surreptitious appropriation" and a malicious parody. Lockwood himself feels "compelled to escape them again" (WH, 413). Heathcliff's domination dissolves in the grave, but bloodless, he and his mistress are given wide berth and a space to walk, and we can be seduced into thinking that bondage has been quarantined to the spirit world. However, Heathcliff's "masked 'other,'" Lockwood's sentimental discourse, enters to appropriate a vocabulary of brutal domination.⁴⁸ Economic exploitation is eroticized, and "love" flourishes most hardily at the site of oppression.⁴⁹

By 1846 institutionalized slavery was part of the British Empire's past; the fiendish, monstrous, inhuman practice was abolished and suppressed, and those with sunny dispositions imagined that it was dead and buried. However, as the volume of discourses related to slavery and the Anglo-Saxon myth of racial superiority testify, it lay in "unquiet slumber" (WH, 414). *Wuthering Heights* suggests that

mastery and bondage are not accidents of race, or history. The plantation site is abandoned “for the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it” (WH, 413) and to become a crumbling reminder that, given the opportunity, all are capable of infinite brutality and falling victim to the addictive pleasure of possessing another human being.

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NOTES

¹ James Walvin, *The Black Presence: A Documentary of the Negroe in England, 1555-1860* (New York: Schocken, 1972), 98, 114.

² Folarin Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555-1833* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 25.

³ See Walvin, *Black Presence* (note 1), 95: “We are of opinion, that a slave coming from the West Indies to Great Britain or Ireland, with or without his master, doth not become free, and that his master’s property or right in him is not thereby determined or varied; and that baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, or make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that his master may legally compel him to return to the plantations.” P. Yorke, Solicitor-General, and C. Talbot, Attorney-General. The opinion did not have the power of “positive law” sufficient for Mansfield to uphold it.

⁴ Quoted Walvin, *Black Presence*, 74.

⁵ Gomer Williams, *History of the Liverpool Privateers and Letters of Marque with an Account of the Liverpool Slave Trade* (1887; rpt., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), 494.

⁶ Percentages have been derived from Williams (note 5), 494, 680, 678 and David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 248.

⁷ For the petition, see Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, *The Last Years of the English Slave Trade: Liverpool, 1750-1807* (1941; reprint, London: Frank Cass, 1968), 17. For information on *Oroonoko* see the Clarendon editors of Southerne, who note: “*Oroonoko* went on to become one of the most frequently performed works in the eighteenth-century theatre. Indeed in the first third of the century it seems to have been the most commonly produced of all the post-Shakespearean tragedies.” After 1759, the play’s popularity in the major playhouses dwindled. However, it “became the property of relatively minor performers” and “appeal[ed] to the amateurs and the inexperienced.” *The Works of Thomas Southerne*, ed. Robert Jordan and Harold Love, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 2:91-92. The editors of the Regents Restoration Drama Series edition assert that by 1760 “revisions of the play were apparently becoming a fad” and they list Hawkesworth’s 1759 adaptation and John Ferriar’s version, *The Prince of Angola*, an unabashedly anti-slave play, as instances (*Oroonoko*, ed. Maximillian E. Novak and David Stuart Rodes [Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1976], xx). From the early eighteenth century, some critics objected to the comic sub-plot, and the versions and adaptations minimized or removed the breeches comedy considered ill-suited to the loftiness of the tragic plot.

⁸ Charles Percy Sanger, “The Structure of *Wuthering Heights*,” in *Wuthering Heights: An Authoritative Text with Essays in Criticism*, 2d ed. (New York: Norton, 1972), 296.

⁹ Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Hilda Marsden and Ian Jack (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 44. All subsequent parenthetical citations of *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte Brontë's "Editor's Preface" refer to this edition and are abbreviated WH.

¹⁰ Like Nelly, we strain to "image some fit parentage" for Heathcliff. His blackness, which is repeatedly evoked, seems always deflected and recast into "high notions of [his] birth." "Race" in *Wuthering Heights* is rendered both anachronistically (see note 28) and in terms of its contemporary discourses. In doing so, this novel constantly threatens the limits of the "enunciative possibilities" of a Victorian novel; to visualize Heathcliff's blackness as sub-Saharan African features irrevocably revises the impact of Brontë's story. According to Michel Foucault, the principles that regulate the emergence of statements in the "episteme," the "archive" or the "discipline" limit what can be said. See *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 197; *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith and Rupert Swyer (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 128-29, 222-25. In recognizing that there are rules that regulate "the enunciative possibilities and impossibilities" of any discursive system including the novel, we should not assume that what can be enunciated in one system can be adequately translated into another. However, a familiarity with contemporary racist discourses can offer an interpretation for some of the behaviors and characteristics of Heathcliff and his son that have been problematic for readers since the book was published. For "enunciative possibilities and impossibilities" see Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 129.

¹¹ Eltis, *Economic Growth* (note 6), 7.

¹² Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Anti-Slavery* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 138; Eltis, 5-6.

¹³ In Marxist terms, the slave owner prior to abolition of the slave trade could ignore a fundamental requirement for a steady supply of labor: procreation. Subsistence, in a slave economy, was no longer bound "to the means necessary [to produce and maintain] the labourer's substitutes, i.e. his children." Karl Marx, *Capital*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2d ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 340. Once the trade was abolished and effectively suppressed in the British colonies the problem of an inadequate subsistence economy for the planter became evident and produced imaginative though ineffective solutions. Monk Lewis, for example, institutes "The Order of the Girdle" which accords special preferments—dispensations from punishments and privileged hearings for special favors—to slave mothers whose infants survived their fourteenth day, an image of the perversity later found in the Nazi valorization of Teutonic motherhood. Matthew Gregory "Monk" Lewis, *Journal of a Residence Among the Negroes in the West Indies* (London, 1845), 66.

¹⁴ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981). Imposing Christian consolation and communal camaraderie onto a pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon culture is inherent in the myth. The existential anguish in, for example, "The Wanderer"—the lament of an Anglo-Saxon warrior deprived of his lord and fellows—is silently erased, and the vision is more post-Norman. The myth creates a happy, primitively democratic crew who joyfully embrace Providence rather than the isolated "eardstapa" who must wearily "wyrde [fate] wiðstondan" without earthly or transcendent direction. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson *A Guide to Old English*, 4th rev.

ed. (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 1.15. Thus the Anglo-Saxon became a figure who was at once free, heroic, and brutally civil.

¹⁵ The seventeenth century experiment with republicanism (1649-1660) inspired a flurry of justifications of regicide and social contract theory. Milton's political tracts, Locke's theoretical works, and later Rousseau's indictments of civilized man are perhaps the most obvious contributions.

¹⁶ Horsman (note 14), 62.

¹⁷ According to Elizabeth Gaskell, the Brontë children had ready access to Mr. Brontë's library and his subscriptions to periodicals that published articles engaging in this debate. Although we do not have more than 'fragmentary pieces of the "Gondol Sagas," Emily's and Anne's juvenile productions, we do have a considerable corpus of Charlotte's and Branwell's juvenilia, some of it in tiny handsewn booklets entitled "The Young Men's Magazine," fashioned after *Blackwood's*. Glass Town, the children's imaginative colony ruled by four Genii, was located in Africa. And we know the children took a lively interest in current events and controversies. Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 112-19.

¹⁸ Some defenders of slavery typically characterized the black slave as docile, dependent and loyal. In an anonymous 1836 review attributed to Edgar Allan Poe, the author writes: "The peculiar character . . . the peculiar nature of the negro" differs in "passions and wants and feelings and tempers in all respects" from the white man. These differences create a relationship "of loyal devotion on the part of the slave to which the white man's heart is a stranger, and of the master's reciprocal feeling of parental attachment to his humble dependent . . . [T]hese sentiments in the breast of the negro and his master, are stronger than they would be under like circumstances between individuals of the white race." Furthermore, "the habitual use of the word 'my' . . . is a term of endearment. That is an easy transition by which he who is taught to call the little negro 'his,' in this sense and *because he loves him*, shall love him *because he is his*." [Edgar Allan Poe], Review of *Slavery in the United States* by J. K. Paulding, in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison, 17 vols. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1902), 8:270-72. For a discussion of the place of the review in the Poe canon, see Joan Dayan, "Romance and Race," in *The Columbia History of the American Novel*, ed. Emory Elliott (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991), 89-109 and "Amorous Bondage: Poe, Ladies, and Slaves," *American Literature* 66 (1994): 239-73. George Frederick Holmes echoes Poe's theory of racial difference: "Thus what would be insupportable to one race, or one order of society, constitutes no portion of the wretchedness of another. The joys and the sorrows of the slave are in harmony with his position, and are entirely dissimilar from what would make the happiness, or misery of another class." George Frederick Holmes, Review of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*, ed. Eric L. McKittrick (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, 1963), 107. Others characterized blacks as brutes. Edward Long catalogs the characteristics: "A covering of wool, like bestial fleece . . . Their bestial or fetid smell . . . In general, they are void of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science. They have no plan or system of morality among them. Their barbarity to their children debases their nature even below that of brutes. They have no moral sensations; no taste but for women; gormondizing, and drinking to excess; no wish but to be idle. . . . They are represented by all authors as the vilest of the human kind, to which they have little more pretension of resemblance than what arises from their exterior form." Edward Long, *The History*

of Jamaica, Or, General Survey of the Ancient and Modern State of that Island (London, 1774), 352-53. Finally, S. T. Coleridge asserts that "the Africans are more versatile, more easily modified than perhaps any other known race." He then draws a distinction between the "savage" and the "barbarian"; "The American Indians are savages: the Africans (to speak classically) barbarians." Both the past and future of the former are uncertain, but the latter are capable of "progress[ing] from barbarism to civilization, through its various stages" because there is evidence that others have done so. Presumably Coleridge refers to Anglo-Saxons. [Samuel Taylor Coleridge], Review of *History of the African Slave Trade* by Thomas Clarkson, *Edinburgh Review* 12 (July, 1808): 378.

¹⁹ Quoted in Horsman (note 14), 70, 71, 60.

²⁰ For a fine analysis of abolitionist expectations of the effects of emancipation and their subsequent disappointments see David Eltis, "Abolitionist Perceptions of Society after Slavery," in *Slavery and British Society: 1776-1846*, ed. James Walvin (London: Macmillan, 1982), 195-213. Coleridge was convinced that the "most intelligent of the African tribes" would adopt Christianity (and presumably the industriousness described in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*) because it was "a religion professed by a race confessedly so superior to them" (Coleridge [note 18], 373). Marx fairly chortles over the discomfit of the Jamaican planters who cannot entice the Quashees (freed slaves) to work for more than subsistence. "Loafing" is the "luxury good" and they "observe the planters' impending bankruptcy with an ironic grin of malicious pleasure, and even exploit their acquired Christianity as an embellishment for this mood of malicious glee and indolence" (Marx [note 13], 250). As Eltis points out: "Other races failing to react in the expected manner . . . did nothing to inhibit the development of a respectable intellectual base to racism" (212). Heathcliff combines self-interest with industriousness, what abolitionists had hoped for; Emily Brontë represents what happens when the racially other does not adopt the religion and civilized values of the system of rules he surreptitiously and violently appropriates.

²¹ Lockwood, the quasi-Anglo Saxon representative of the outside world, contrasts sharply with this insular world. He is probably nouveau riche: well-heeled, but rootless, lacking property, purpose through industry, and an identity of his own. His pretensions to Byronic heroism are clearly the object of ridicule in the opening chapters: "He suffers from the inanity his author attributes to the average London reader." Carl R. Woodring, "The Narrators of *Wuthering Heights*," in *Wuthering Heights: Authoritative Text with Essays in Criticism*, 2d ed. (New York: Norton, 1972), 355. With a fool's accuracy, Lockwood applies the glibly figurative to the literal circumstance, describing *Wuthering Heights* as "a perfect misanthrope's Heaven," and Heathcliff "a capital fellow" (*WH*, 3). Furthermore, he is the master narrator who authors the text's "enunciative possibilities and impossibilities." The text of *Wuthering Heights*, with its dual narrators, might exemplify a "contact zone" as Mary Louise Pratt defines it, and Lockwood's "urban discourse about [a] non-urban world" represents the mid-eighteenth-century hypothesis that "those who live a hundred miles from the capital, are a century [or an ocean] away from it in their modes of thinking and acting." Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 67, 34-35. Much more about the relationship between his discourse and those of Long, Edwards and Lewis (other travellers to primitive areas) needs to be considered.

²² See Terry Eagleton, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (New York:

Barnes and Noble, 1975). This reading focuses on class bondage, which effectively erases the issue of race and institutionalized slavery; however, Eagleton identifies elements that seem central to mid-century discourses on race: “[Heathcliff’s] undisguised violence, like the absolutism of his love, come to seem features of a past more brutal but also more heroic than the present” and Catherine and Heathcliff’s “relationship articulates a depth inexpressible in routine social practice, transcendent [read: transgressive] of available social languages” (114, 108).

²³ Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell, the Brontë’s pseudonyms, were each reproached for coarseness, vulgarity and lack of taste. Until Matthew Arnold had a go at *Villette*, *Wuthering Heights* bore the brunt of Victorian indignation. Here I cite first the *Atlas* review of January 1848, and then Elizabeth Rigby’s indictment of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in the *Quarterly Review* of December 1848. See Miriam Allott, *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 231, 111, for a fuller sense of the awe and outrage the book incited.

²⁴ Behn on the planters: “The Governour had no sooner recover’d and had heard of the Menaces of *Cæsar*, but he called his Council, who (not to disgrace them, or burlesque the Government there) consisted of such notorious Villains as *Newgate* never transported; and, possibly originally were such, who understood neither the Laws of God or Man, and had no sort of Principles to make them worthy the Name of Men; but at the very Council-Table wou’d contradict and fight with one another, and swear so bloodily, that ’twas terrible to hear and see ‘em.” Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko: Or, the Royal Slave* (New York: Norton, 1973), 69-70. Southerne so vilifies Captain Driver, the slaver, that even the gold digging sisters of the comic sub-plot reject him, although the planters “applaud him” for encouraging “industry” (1.2.161, 156). The governor is a potential ravisher, and the planters are rabble who speak coarse prose, while the hero speaks eloquent blank verse. Blanford, Oroonoko’s impotent champion, speaks to the planters:

Have you no Reverence of future Fame?
No awe upon your actions, from the Tongues,
The censuring Tongues of Men, that will be free?
If you confess Humanity, believe
There is a God, or Devil, to reward
Our doings here, do not provoke your Fate.
The Hand of Heaven is arm’d against these Crimes,
With hotter Thunder-Bolts, prepar’d to shoot,
And Nail you to the Earth, a sad Example;
A Monument of Faithless Infamy. (5.2.1-10)

Southerne (note 7), 2:85-180.

²⁵ Walvin, *Black Presence* (note 1), 100. See also Long (note 18), 485. The notion that slavery was a corrupting and contaminating influence on the master was a staple of not only the abolitionists’ texts, but the institution’s defenders as well. Long comments on the Jamaican *Code Noir* of the early seventeenth century: “Men are too often disposed to be cruel, of their own depraved hearts; and it becomes a Christian legislature not to inflame and encourage, but to repress as much as possible, this sanguinary disposition.”

²⁶ See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

²⁷ Long (note 18), 354.

²⁸ Race is a vexed term. Historically it was used to designate kinship, of family, extended family or tribe, of gender, of profession or inclination. Its use as a term to identify a classification of humanity is first instanced by the OED in 1776. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the term was primarily used to distinguish an aristocratic “race” from parvenus and the mob. See Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (note 24), 9, 26, and Michael McKeon’s “Aristocratic Ideology,” in *Origins of the English Novel: 1660-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 131-133. One of the great bourgeois victories of the eighteenth century, separating status from blood while appropriating the status of blood, rests in part on reconstruing “race.” Despite Locke’s *tabula rasa* and utilitarian schemes for education, biological essentialism, now theoretically divorced from class, was on the ascendent; witness for example the popularity of phrenology. See also, George Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Macmillan/Free, 1987), in which he notes that “there was an emerging racialism of a harsher, hereditarian sort, which rejected Lamarckian biocultural interactionism and subordinated culture to race.” He goes on to quote from Darwin’s *Beagle* journal where the scientist speculates about the possible savagery of “our progenitors,” and then asserts: “In the 1830s such thinking was less intellectually acceptable than it had been a half century earlier or was again to be a half century hence” (105-107).

²⁹ See Marx, *Capital* (note 13), “The Fetishism of Commodities,” esp. 321. Lukács’ “reification” extends the concept of commodity fetishism beyond the objectification and alienation of one’s labor to include commodification of “non-material” products—ideas, institutions, values—which both serve to totalize capitalist ideology and further individuate and alienate the self from its products. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingston (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968, 1971), 83-222. Both theorists employ slavery figuratively or as a fact of “antiquity” that ignores the very real exchange value, the price, the owner could demand for human property. See esp. Lukács, 166-69.

³⁰ Joan Dayan’s “Race and Romance” (note 18) has fundamentally informed my argument. Primarily concerned with how slavery and race were figured in American romance, Dayan notes that in a system of bondage “the conversion of person into thing for the ends of capital” generated a “twisted sentimentality” and a “cruel analytic of ‘love.’” Furthermore, the addictive pleasure of absolute domination depends on the slave who becomes “a necessary part of the master’s or mistress’s identity” so that “extremes of differences [are] blurred in an odd promiscuity” (90). James Walvin also uses the trope of addiction: “Dependence of African slaves had taken on addictive proportions” (*Black Presence* [note 1], 9).

³¹ Foucault posits: “If interpretation is the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules, which in itself has no essential meaning, in order to impose a direction, to bend it to a new will, to force its participation in a different game, and to subject it to secondary rules, then the development of humanity is a series of interpretations.” Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essay and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 151-52.

³² Physical intimacy was an inevitable by-product of slavery. The domestic slave attended to the most personal of needs including wetnursing, caring for the young and infirm, bathing, and removal of bodily wastes. We can deduce that shortly after

his arrival, Heathcliff was put to bed with the Earnshaw children by Earnshaw's orders (WH, 45), and Hindley was removed at least by the time he goes to school some three years later. We know that Cathy was "laid alone for the first time" (WH, 153) at age twelve and that she and Heathcliff shared the "large oak case" (WH, 350). Lockwood invites us to speculate about the sexual nature of the relationship when he notes that the bed was designed for conjugal privacy (WH, 23), but Cathy's hallucination accompanies her illness and Nelly's negligent nursing. See Poe (note 18).

³³ See Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1954). Jefferson in describing the distinguishing features of the black race explains: "They are more ardent after their female: But love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation" (139). Jefferson's manuscript originally read: "But love is with them only an eager desire, not a tender delicate excitement, not a delicious foment of the soul" (288, n. 8). As noted earlier Charlotte Brontë terms Heathcliff's love "fierce and inhuman." We can speculate that Isabella is attracted to the "eager desire" as she agrees to elope. Nelly appears to attempt the Jeffersonian distinction in contrasting Cathy and Heathcliff's "love" to Catherine and Hareton's. Lockwood seems more ambivalent.

³⁴ See Williams (note 5). The author reprints obituaries from a Liverpool newspaper eulogizing the faithfulness of black servants: "On Saturday, February 26th, 1780, died . . . a merchant who acquired a large fortune in Jamaica; and on Tuesday died his faithful black servant" (554n). The implication, of course, is that the slave had no reason to live once his master had passed away. Selfless heroics were also a staple: "Rushton swam towards a small water cask, which point of safety Quamina had previously attained, and when the negro saw that his friend was too much exhausted to reach the cask, he pushed it towards him, bade him good bye, and sank to rise no more" (WH, 571).

³⁵ Lady Maria Nugent and Edward Long both worried that in Jamaica the close proximity to black servants corrupted the speech and deportment of the young white ladies of the house. See Dayan, "Race and Romance" (note 18): "Nugent and Long speak from the position of a dominant culture: threatened by the fact of *creolization*, a contamination, as they see it, of the pure civilities of Mother England" (89).

³⁶ As orchestrator of the dual nature of racialist discourse, Emily Brontë "causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events." Located "between tradition and oblivion" (Anglo-Saxonism and racial disorder, civility and unrestrained passion), this hybrid discursive practice "enables statements both to survive and to undergo modification" (Foucault, *Archaeology* [note 10], 130). These "regular events" are not the multiple deaths, Heathcliff's aborted revenge, or the "fusion rather than confrontation of interests between gentry and bourgeoisie" (Eagleton [note 22], 117). The events are instead "the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of the masked 'other'" (Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" [note 31], 154).

³⁷ Visitors to the new world typically were fascinated by animal and plant life not native to the old. "Monk" Lewis (note 13) mentions encounters with centipedes a number of times, and one section entitled "Centipedes," describes an experiment in

which a centipede is cut in half, put under “a glass cover” and watched for signs of regeneration from Saturday until the following Thursday when both parts vanish. Lewis laments, “Gone they both are, and I am disappointed beyond measure. I have proclaimed a reward for the bringing me of another” (146-47).

³⁸ Jefferson (note 33), 143. Dayan, “Romance and Race” (note 18), 89.

³⁹ Bryan Edwards, *History of the West Indies* (London, 1793), 39.

⁴⁰ Long (note 18) informs us that oran-outangs “sometimes endeavour to surprize and carry off Negroe women into their woody retreats, in order to enjoy them” (360). “Ludicrous as the opinion may seem, I do not think that an oran-outang husband would be any dishonour to an Hottentot female” (364). Finally, “The equally hot temperament of their women has given probability to the charge of their admitting these animals [monkies or baboons] frequently to their embrace. An example of this intercourse once happened, I think, in England; and if lust can prompt to such excesses in that Northern region, and in despite of all the checks which national politeness and refined sentiments impose, how freely may it not operate in the more genial soil of Afric, that parent of every thing that is monstrous in nature, where these creatures are frequent and familiar; where the passions rage without any controul; and the retired wilderness presents opportunity to gratify them without fear of detection!” (383).

⁴¹ See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random/Vintage, 1979), 227 and the section on the Panopticon as a laboratory, 203-4; and *The History of Sexuality: Volume I, An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random/Vintage, 1978): “A pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light” (45).

⁴² He experiments with a knowledge as Foucault describes it: “A knowledge, which is dissociated from pleasure and happiness, is linked to the struggle, the hate, and the spitefulness directed against it until it arrives at its own rejection as an excess created by struggle, hate, and spitefulness.” Michel Foucault, “History of Systems of Thought,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (note 31), 203.

⁴³ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977). In 1807, the year Britain outlawed the slave trade, Hegel published the *Phenomenology*, which spiritualizes “lordship and bondage.” In Hegel’s schema both lord and bondsman seek freedom, understood as detachment from “life” (113) or “natural existence” (117). The former achieves freedom through “staking one’s life” and thus demonstrating that one is not “submerged in the expanse of life” and instead recognizes that there is “nothing in it [life] which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment” (114). The lord is appetitive and relates immediately to the world of things by negation, by enjoying them. In contrast, the bondsman works on things, and “through his service rids himself of his attachment to natural existence” (117). Significantly, it is the slave’s self-consciousness that progresses through the dialectic to achieve an *Aufhebung*, escaping “the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and step[ping] out into the spiritual daylight of the present” (111). Heathcliff’s demise bears an uncanny resemblance to the progress of the “Unhappy Consciousness.” He loses his appetite, both literal and figurative. His labors have effected a change so that all objects, animate and inanimate, resemble his object of desire; Catherine and Hareton “are the only objects which retain a distinct material appearance to [him]”; he has to remind himself “to breathe” and his “heart to beat” (WH, 393-95). His existence is

“devoured” and he is “swallowed” by anticipation (WH, 395). Like Heathcliff, for the Unhappy Consciousness, “Action and its own actual doing remain pitiable, its enjoyment remains pain, and the overcoming of these in a positive sense remains a *beyond*” (138); Heathcliff looks on a “fancied object” that “communicate[s], apparently, both pleasure and pain, in exquisite extremes” (WH, 405). “His soul’s bliss kills [his] body, but does not satisfy itself” (WH, 408). In Hegel’s terms, he “has successfully struggled to divest [himself] of [his] being-for-self and has turned [himself] into [mere] being . . . aware of his *unity* with this universal, a unity which . . . no longer falls outside of [him] since the superseded single individual is the universal” (139). Nelly reminds us he died with a “frightful, life-like gaze of exultation” (WH, 411).

⁴⁴ Lewis (note 13), 55, 180–81.

⁴⁵ Jefferson (note 33), 141–42. This policy was enacted. The American effort at “repatriation” of Africans was Liberia, already established as “the independent African state of Maryland” prior to 1834. As with emancipation, the British preceded the Americans in relocating freed blacks. In 1787 the abolitionists were able to secure parliamentary sanction for the Sierra Leone Company:

The persons more generally fixed upon for colonists, were such Negroes, with their wives and families as chose to abandon their habitations in Nova Scotia. These had followed the British arms in America; and had been settled there, as a reward for their services, by the British government. [Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by Parliament*, 2 vols. (1808; rpt., London: Frank Cass, 1968), 2:343].

The British rewarded their Black loyalists with settlements thousands of miles from the shores of Mother England, reducing the threat of intimate proximity, miscegenation and its offspring.

⁴⁶ Eagleton (note 22), 118.

⁴⁷ For citations of these terms, see Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (note 31) and Dayan, “Race and Romance” (note 18).

⁴⁸ See also Pratt (note 21), where she identifies a similar phenomenon, coining the term “anti-conquest” for “the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (7). However, Lockwood’s pretensions to imperialism are as ludicrous as those to Byronicism: he is a parody of the “seeing man” . . . whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess.” Even so, his very ineptitude, his inability to see, is disquieting if we entertain the concept that discourse is a machine not only of representation but also of surveillance, like the Panopticon. Foucault says of the Panopticon: “There is a machinery [read: discourse] that assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference.” In contrast to the classical deference to ethos and testimony, “it does not matter who exercises [its] power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine.” Motive—“curiosity,” “thirst for knowledge” or “perversity”—is irrelevant. This language of love “is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effect of power” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* [note 42], 202).

⁴⁹ Dayan (note 18) succinctly expresses this relationship between love and oppression.